SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
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JEFFERSON B. SESSIONS, III,)
Attorney General,)
Petitioner,)
v.) No. 15-1498
JAMES GARCIA DIMAYA,)
Respondent.)

Pages: 1 through 61

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6	v.) No. 15-1498
7	JAMES GARCIA DIMAYA,)
8	Respondent.)
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10	
11	Washington, D.C.
12	Monday, October 2, 2017
13	
14	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
15	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
16	at 11:10 a.m.
17	
18	APPEARANCES:
19	EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, Deputy Solicitor General,
20	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf
21	of the United States.
22	E. JOSHUA ROSENKRANZ, New York, New York; on behalf of
23	the Respondent.
24	
25	

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:10 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 15-1498, Sessions versus
5	Dimaya.
6	Mr. Kneedler.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, ESQ.
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. KNEEDLER: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	The Ninth Circuit erred in holding
12	that this Court's decision in Johnson compelled
13	the conclusion that the definition of crime of
14	violence in the INA's broader definition of
15	aggravated felony is unconstitutionally vague.
16	That is so for two reasons. First,
17	the standard for assessing vagueness in the
18	immigration context is not the one that's
19	applicable in criminal cases.
20	Immigration removal is not a
21	punishment for past conduct. It operates
22	prospectively on the basis of the application
23	of standards adopted by Congress under which ar
24	alien is regarded as no longer conducive to the
25	to welfare

1	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Kneedler, if
2	you're if you're making the distinction that
3	Johnson was a criminal case and this is a civil
4	case, this Court has had a number of decisions
5	saying that line is not so rigid. For example,
6	MLB, taking away parental rights, is a civil
7	proceeding. And yet the Court said, as in a
8	criminal proceeding, for an indigent party, the
9	state must give the transcript free. And so if
10	you had followed a rigid criminal/civil, then
11	if it's civil, no free transcript. Only if
12	it's criminal.
13	But the Court said the line is blurred
14	when there is such a grave consequence. It was
15	a grave consequence to be denied parental
16	rights. It's a grave consequence to be removed
17	from the United States.
18	MR. KNEEDLER: And so our submission
19	is not just the distinction between civil and
20	criminal, although we think the Court's cases
21	establish that there is that there is a
22	difference. But the important points here,
23	though, are immigration is distinctive.
24	Immigration, this Court has repeatedly
25	said, even though it may be regarded as a harsh

- 1 result or -- or can have a serious impact on a
- person's life, it is not punishment for past
- 3 offense. It operates prospectively because
- 4 Congress has determined that the individual's
- 5 presence in the United States is no longer
- 6 conducive to the safety or welfare of the
- 7 country.
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Kneedler, does
- 9 that permit arbitrary removal? Can the
- 10 immigration officials walk down the street and
- 11 say I just don't like the way you look; out?
- MR. KNEEDLER: No. And this brings me
- 13 to --
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but let me
- 15 get to that. So whether the distinction is
- 16 criminal or civil, the issue for us, as I
- 17 understand it under Johnson, is, is it
- 18 arbitrary? Is it so arbitrary that under any
- 19 standard, criminal or civil, this is vague?
- Now, I know you're saying it's not
- 21 arbitrary for a bunch of different reasons.
- 22 But please explain to me on the two grounds
- that Johnson used, ordinary case and type of
- risk, how this is not equally arbitrary.
- 25 MR. KNEEDLER: There are a number of

- 1 -- a number of reasons why we -- why we think
- 2 that's true. First of all, the Court said in
- 3 Johnson it was the sum of the various
- 4 attributes of the ACCA residual clause that
- 5 created the problem.
- 6 So whatever -- whatever might be the
- 7 problem with -- with one of those, it was the
- 8 combination of those.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, I thought it
- 10 was only two. The other things it mentioned
- 11 were --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, but they were --
- 13 they were critical attributes of the two.
- 14 That's the -- that's the important point.
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, what the Court
- 16 said is -- I'm quoting -- "two features of the
- 17 residual clause conspire to make it
- 18 unconstitutionally vague." And then there's,
- 19 you know, a clear holding sentence just a
- 20 little bit later on in the opinion where it
- 21 basically tells you exactly what two aspects it
- is talking about. It says, "by combining
- indeterminacy about how to measure the risk
- 24 posed by a crime with indeterminacy about how
- 25 much risk it takes for the crime to qualify as

- 1 a violent felony. The residual clause produces
- 2 more unpredictability and arbitrariness than
- 3 the Due Process Clause authorized tolerates."
- So, you know, it says, Number 1,
- 5 ordinary case analysis. Number 2, combined
- 6 with a fairly fuzzy standard as to the
- 7 threshold level of risk. And those were the
- 8 two factors.
- 9 And I guess the question is are those
- 10 two factors any different here?
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, they're -- they're
- 12 very different here.
- 13 And as this Court's decision in Leocal
- 14 demonstrates, it relied on the -- on the
- 15 features that we believe are -- critically
- 16 distinguished 16(b) from the ACCA residual
- 17 clause.
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: Here it's the fact
- 19 that there's ordinary case analysis, both
- 20 statutes, right?
- MR. KNEEDLER: No, but they -- but
- 22 they operate in -- in very different -- in very
- 23 different ways. The -- ordinary cases is a way
- of saying that the elements don't have to match
- 25 up like under 16(a). It doesn't have to be the

actual use of force. 16(b) addresses those 1 situations in which the elements of the offense 2. 3 involve a substantial risk that physical force would be used even though it's not actually an 4 5 element. So whereas under the ACCA residual 6 7 clause, the ordinary case analysis was not -was not tied to the text of -- of the relevant 8 9 provision as it is here. There are three provisions in the -- in the ordinary case 10 11 analysis that are here that weren't present 12 there. 13 You look to the nature of the offense, 14 the offense by its nature. And this Court said 15 in Leocal that means you look at the elements and the nature of the offense, involve a 16 serious or substantial risk of physical force 17 will be used, not that injury might result down 18 the road but physical force, which this Court 19 20 said is a -- is a focused inquiry and specifically distinguished the possibility that 21 22 harm might result. And in footnote 7 of the 23 Court's opinion, it specifically distinguished

a sentencing guideline that uses the very

language of the ACCA residual clause and said

24

- 1 this is not open-ended like that.
- 2 And then the -- 16(b) says the
- 3 substantial risk has to arise in the course of
- 4 the commission of the offense, which means it's
- 5 tied both temporally to the -- to the actual
- 6 conduct of the offense and functionally, does
- 7 the substantial risk inhere in the elements of
- 8 the offense.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So how do those
- 10 two things change the definition of what an
- ordinary case is in burglary? The only time
- that I understand that burglars actually go
- into an occupied home is very little. It's
- 14 probably less than 10 percent in which they
- 15 confront someone, probably smaller amount when
- they actually use force against that person.
- 17 Lots of burglaries are done with open doors or
- 18 with jimmying without injuring a lock.
- 19 How does any of those two things
- 20 you've mentioned -- how do they change what
- 21 constitutes an ordinary case for burglary and
- 22 what the substantial risk of use of physical
- 23 force or injury is?
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, again, I think
- 25 starting with the text of 16(b), you look at

- 1 the nature of the offense, the elements of the
- 2 offense. Do they -- is inherent in those
- 3 elements a risk, a substantial risk that force
- 4 will be used?
- 5 And so looking at burglary, what is
- 6 the nature of the offense with respect to the
- 7 risk of harm -- or, excuse me, the risk of the
- 8 use of force?
- 9 Well, this Court said in Leocal that
- 10 the -- the nature of the offense there is that
- 11 the burglar will encounter someone. If it's
- 12 risk of force against a person, that the --
- 13 that the offender will encounter someone while
- 14 committing the offense --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Justice Scalia did
- 16 exactly that in Johnson and said the ordinary
- 17 case and the risk of force or injury is
- something that you're leaving to the judge's
- 19 intuition.
- 20 MR. KNEEDLER: No, I mean, with
- 21 respect, Justice Scalia's opinion in -- in
- Johnson or -- or in James, or whatever case you
- may be speaking of, was not about 16(b), and --
- 24 and a unanimous decision of this Court written
- 25 by Chief Justice Rehnquist identified burglary

1 as the classic example of what is covered by 16

- 2 --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, it wasn't
- 4 part of the residual clause anyway.
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Kneedler, may I
- 6 -- may I ask you just a couple quick questions?
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Sure.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I hope they're
- 9 quick.
- 10 First, getting back to the standard of
- 11 review and the distinction between criminal and
- 12 civil, this Court seems to have drawn that line
- 13 based on the severity of the consequences that
- 14 follow to the individual, but that seems to me
- a tough line here to draw because I can easily
- 16 imagine a misdemeanant who may be convicted of
- 17 a crime for which the sentence is six months in
- jail or a \$100 fine, and he wouldn't trade
- 19 places in the world for someone who is
- 20 deported -- deported from this country pursuant
- 21 to a civil order or perhaps the subject of a
- 22 civil forfeiture requirement and loses his
- home.
- 24 So how sound is that line that we've
- 25 drawn in the past, especially when the

- 1 civil/criminal divide itself is now a
- 2 seven-part balancing test, not exclusive, so
- 3 there may be more than seven factors as I
- 4 understand it.
- 5 And I look at the text of the
- 6 Constitution, always a good place to start, and
- 7 the Due Process Clause speaks of the loss of
- 8 life, liberty, or property. It doesn't draw a
- 9 civil/criminal line, and yet, elsewhere, even
- in the Fifth Amendment, I do see that line
- 11 drawn, the right to self-incrimination, for
- 12 example.
- So help me out with that.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, I -- the -- I
- think the analysis derives from the thinking
- 16 about what the purpose of vagueness
- 17 restrictions are, and as this Court has said in
- 18 the criminal context, there are two basic
- 19 points.
- 20 One is that an individual, a person of
- 21 common intelligence should know, have notice of
- 22 what the law requires --
- 23 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Fair notice of the
- 24 law.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Right.

1	JUSTICE GORSUCH: And isn't it really
2	important in the civil context, too, when we
3	have so many civil laws today, and they're
4	often hidden away in places like the Federal
5	Register and other other fine reads like
6	that?
7	MR. KNEEDLER: Well, and the second
8	point I was going to mention is, is whether it
9	gives rise to the potential for arbitrary
10	enforcement. And what's different about
11	immigration, for example, from from the
12	criminal law, for example, the notice
13	JUSTICE GORSUCH: But you'd agree the
14	fair notice point pertains to both the civil
15	and the criminal sides?
16	MR. KNEEDLER: It does, but I think in
17	in in different respects, and in some
18	ways, the two points I just mentioned or the
19	two points the Court has emphasized are are
20	related in in some ways.
21	But with respect to the notice inand
22	the immigration context, this Court has held
23	that the ex post facto clause, which is
24	applicable in criminal proceedings, does not
25	apply in immigration proceedings.

1	And, therefore, a person may be
2	removed from the United States on a ground that
3	was not a ground for removal at the time he
4	engaged in the particular conduct.
5	So the the idea that the that
6	the statute for that reason has to have a
7	notice element does not work. And then there
8	is the concern about arbitrary enforcement.
9	This is not, by the way, the sort of
10	statute that regulates loitering or being
11	annoying on the streets or something which is
12	at the height of where I think the Court's
13	concern has been about police and juries and
14	judges being arbitrary in the application.
15	The immigration laws have always been
16	enforced through a broad delegation of
17	authority to the executive branch, reflecting
18	the fact that immigration and immigration
19	enforcement are closely related to the national
20	security and foreign relations of the United
21	States.
22	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Kneedler, does
23	the government have another string in its bow
24	here, and we're arguing about 16(b) and its
25	resemblance to ACCA, but you can be removed if

- 1 you commit a crime of moral turpitude, and
- wouldn't burglary fall under that?
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, it -- it would
- 4 depend on the -- the rules for what is a crime
- 5 involving moral turpitude are somewhat
- 6 intricate, depending on the nature of the
- 7 offense. It's not --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, hasn't it
- 9 been determine whether burglary is a crime of
- 10 moral turpitude?
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: Again, it would depend
- on the nature of the offense. In this
- 13 particular case, the immigration judge
- 14 concluded that the conduct here involved a
- 15 crime involving moral turpitude, but the IJ did
- 16 not apply the categorical approach. It applied
- 17 a fact-specific approach and concluded that the
- 18 defendant's conduct in this case amounted to a
- 19 crime involving moral turpitude.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: You think the concept
- of a crime of moral turpitude is less vague
- 22 than 16(b)?
- MR. KNEEDLER: No, I -- I think not,
- 24 but -- but this -- this, I think, brings --
- 25 brings to mind what's importantly about

- 1 immigration enforcement or, frankly, a lot of
- 2 civil enforcement --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But Kneedler --
- 4 Mr. Kneedler, the crime of moral turpitude is
- 5 always applied to the facts of the case. So
- 6 Johnson pointed out that, when you have a
- 7 statute that uses approximations like
- 8 substantial or significant or severe, that what
- 9 gives it life is its application to actual
- 10 facts.
- 11 The difference between these two
- 12 approaches is that this one is asking judges to
- 13 hypothesize the facts and has nothing to do
- 14 with the reality of the crime.
- 15 MR. KNEEDLER: But with respect, a
- 16 crime involving moral turpitude, the
- 17 categorical approach is applied there. It is
- 18 not -- it is not a fact-specific determination.
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: But it is a different
- 20 kind of categorical approach, isn't it? It's
- 21 asking what the elements of the offense are
- that everybody has to commit, as opposed to
- what the elements of the offense are that
- 24 people commit in the ordinary case, whatever
- 25 that might be.

- 1 And that raises the question that
- 2 Justice Scalia thought was so important in
- 3 Johnson and elsewhere, where he says that
- 4 there's no way really for a Court to do that,
- 5 you know, this is the -- the line, should we
- 6 look to a statistical analysis of the state
- 7 report or a survey, expert evidence, Google,
- 8 gut instinct, that this is the problem with
- 9 ACCA's residual clause under Johnson as it is
- 10 here, is that we don't really have a source of
- law to look to to tell what an ordinary case is
- in -- under either statute.
- 13 MR. KNEEDLER: No, I -- I really
- 14 don't think that's correct.
- In Johnson, again, the Court was
- 16 concerned about a statute that referred to the
- 17 chance -- the chance that injury will occur
- which could be completely open-ended.
- 19 Here, this is tied to the text of the
- 20 statute, by its nature, does it give rise to
- 21 the risk of force or --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Before you get into
- that question, before you get into does it do
- this in terms of force, or does it do that in
- 25 terms of injury, before you do any of that, you

- 1 have to have an understanding of the ordinary
- 2 case is.
- 3 And the problem in Johnson with ACCA's
- 4 residual clause, according to Justice Scalia
- 5 and the Court, was that there was no way to
- 6 tell what that ordinary case was.
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Again, with respect,
- 8 this Court, in Leocal, unanimously held that
- 9 burglary is a classic example, and it gave the
- 10 reason why, which I think is helpful for
- answering this question more generally.
- 12 And the Court said that -- that
- burglary, by its nature, in the course of
- 14 commission -- committing the offense, gives
- rise to a risk that physical force would be
- 16 used during the offense because the person will
- 17 encounter someone else.
- 18 So built in inherent in the nature of
- burglary is the risk that the burglar will
- 20 encounter someone while the crime is being
- 21 committed.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, Mr. -- Mr.
- 23 Kneedler, if I might interrupt, I'm sorry, but
- this raises a question for me about the nature
- of our task here.

- 1 It seems to me that one function
- of -- of our void-for-vagueness doctrine is not
- 3 just to ensure fair notice, procedural due
- 4 process -- I think you'd agree with that.
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, but the notice --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yes.
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: With the caveat about
- 8 immigration, we're --
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Of course not -- of
- 10 course not in this case, right, but, generally,
- 11 the doctrine serves that function.
- 12 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes.
- 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And it also serves a
- 14 separation of powers function. When the law
- 15 runs out and the judges cannot say what the law
- is, they don't make it up. Right?
- 17 And we stop. That's why we don't have
- 18 a federal common law of crime, for example,
- 19 right? And I wonder here how I would go about
- 20 determining what the ordinary case is, the
- 21 ordinary course of burglary in California, does
- it include fraudulently selling securities in
- someone's home, that's burglary in California,
- is that the ordinary case or not?
- 25 I would probably want to have

- 1 statistics and evidentiary hearings and hear
- 2 experts on that question. And that sounds to
- 3 me a lot like what a legislative committee
- 4 might do. And if I can't distinguish my job
- from a legislative committee's work, am I not
- 6 verging on the separation of powers problem?
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, at the margins or
- 8 -- or at the outer limits, there may be
- 9 problems like that. But I think it's important
- 10 for the Court to focus on the core of what --
- 11 this -- this, unlike the ACCA residual clause,
- 12 has a core, what the Court -- another point we
- haven't discussed, what the Court was concerned
- 14 about is --
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But could you answer
- 16 my question?
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: Yeah. I was -- I was
- 18 getting there.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Great.
- 20 MR. KNEEDLER: I apologize. But the
- 21 -- if we look at the -- I think the Court can
- 22 comfortably look and see whether the statute
- 23 has a core of administrable offenses. If there
- are ones at the margin, for example, that would
- 25 give rise to the concern you're raising --

- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, let's take
- 2 burglary in California, what the ordinary --
- 3 oh, and what level of generality am I supposed
- 4 to look at in terms of what the ordinary case
- 5 is? Municipality, Orange County, state,
- 6 California, the country? Or do I make that
- 7 legislative choice too?
- 8 I'm just wondering -- even take
- 9 burglary in California, how am I supposed to
- 10 know what ordinary is?
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, California --
- 12 California burglary would be a close question,
- 13 frankly. Now, here, it was -- it was resident
- 14 -- it was class 1 burglary.
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: If burglary is a
- 16 close case, then doesn't that tells us --
- 17 MR. KNEEDLER: No, no. California
- 18 burglary.
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: California burglary.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Only because -- only
- 21 because California burglary does not require an
- 22 unlawful entry or unlawful remaining, and
- therefore, it does not satisfy generic
- 24 burglary, but generic burglary, as this Court
- 25 again unanimously held in -- in -- in Leocal,

- 1 is a classic example.
- 2 And if I could use a couple of others,
- 3 just to show the Court is not at sea here,
- 4 kidnapping is another one. Kidnapping may be
- 5 accomplished -- it's typically accomplished
- 6 maybe by the use of force, but can also be
- 7 accomplished by trick.
- 8 But that -- that doesn't mean that
- 9 it's not covered by 16(b) because the entire
- 10 time that the victim is being confined, whether
- or not he or she knows it initially that she's
- 12 being confined against her will, once she finds
- out that she is, the risk of harm will
- 14 materialize.
- 15 It's a continuing offense --
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But, Mr. Kneedler,
- 17 I'm sorry, I just -- I just am stuck on my
- 18 question. How am I supposed to determine what
- 19 the ordinary case is? Should I bring in some
- 20 experts and have an evidentiary hearing? And
- 21 if so, why -- why isn't that a legislative
- 22 function?
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, I -- there may be
- 24 cases where the statute itself is not clear as
- 25 to whether the elements give rise to the

- 1 requisite risk. And -- and California burglary
- 2 may be one of them.
- 3 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So you would have me
- 4 bring in experts?
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: No. I --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: You wouldn't -- you
- 7 wouldn't -- look, I'm just trying to get an
- 8 answer on that.
- 9 MR. KNEEDLER: No, I'm not -- no, no,
- 10 I'm not saying -- I'm not saying experts, but
- 11 -- but -- but where there are statistics
- 12 available, for example, as -- as there were in
- 13 several of -- of this Court's cases under the
- 14 ACCA residual clause, that statistics were
- 15 looked to to really reinforce common sense.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But do you
- 17 remember -- probably you do or maybe not, that
- 18 several judges, I remember because one of them
- 19 was me -- and some of the lower court judges
- 20 said, why doesn't the sentencing commission or
- 21 why doesn't that part of the Justice Department
- 22 that keeps track of statistics go out and find
- out what is the typical way in which, for the
- 24 ACCA provision, you know, the other provision,
- they're committed, and case after case went by,

- 1 and nobody ever had the statistics.
- 2 And I tended to think, well, they
- 3 can't get them. Otherwise, they would. And so
- 4 what's the story? I think it's a similar
- 5 question to what is being asked.
- 6 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, there -- there
- 7 may be general categories of offenses where
- 8 that -- where that could --
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, there were a
- 10 lot -- in other words, we never had a case,
- 11 that I can remember, under that other
- 12 provision, where somebody came up with
- 13 statistics, despite what I'd call leading by a
- 14 lot of --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, there were --
- 16 there were statistics in chambers --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: There were? Okay.
- 18 MR. KNEEDLER: And then there were
- 19 statistics --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Then there are some.
- MR. KNEEDLER: And there are some
- 22 statistics and cites dealing with -- with
- vehicle -- flight from an officer -- but I'm
- 24 not --
- 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Law clerks are

- 1 excellent at gathering statistics, but they're
- 2 probably not as good as a legislative
- 3 committee.
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: Yeah, no, but I think
- 5 it's important to recognize that what we have
- 6 here is a legislative enactment in which
- 7 Congress chose to identify the crimes that are
- 8 covered by categories, the type of offense.
- 9 And there -- and there is only so much
- 10 that one can expect from a legislature in
- identifying a category. And here, Congress
- identified a category in 16(b) that is very
- 13 closely tied to 16(a).
- 14 16(a) involves the situations where
- 15 the element -- the element of the offense
- 16 itself involves the use or threatened use of
- force. 16(b) expands that slightly to say,
- 18 okay, it may not be technically an element, but
- is the -- is the offense under 16(b) so
- 20 instinct or inherent -- inherently contained, a
- 21 risk of the use of force, that it -- that it
- 22 should fall -- should fall in Congress's
- judgment in that same category?
- You look at other offenses, a number
- of lower courts have held that conspiracy to

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1 commit Hobbs Act robbery is a crime of
```

- 2 violence. Robbery certainly is a crime of
- 3 violence.
- 4 Conspiracy itself contains the
- 5 substantial risk of physical force being used
- 6 because conspiracy is an agreement to commit
- 7 the very crime that will -- that will result in
- 8 physical force, conspiracy to commit --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How about
- 10 statutory rape?
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: Statutory --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: To start with,
- 13 they know -- the courts below --
- 14 MR. KNEEDLER: Statutory -- sex
- offenses are difficult in any context. Sexual
- 16 abuse of a minor, as the Court knows from last
- 17 year's case, but there is a category of cases,
- 18 and we cite some in -- in our brief where --
- 19 with a sufficient age difference between an
- adult and minor, the use of physical force is
- inherent in the nature of the offense, that
- 22 when -- when the adult -- even if the -- even
- if the adult is able to get the child to comply
- 24 without actually using physical force, the
- 25 threat or the potential for physical force is

- 1 always present, if the child resists the -- the
- 2 adult can use force.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that the
- 4 ordinary case? I thought that most of the
- 5 pornography cases that we're seeing are
- 6 children not being physically forced into sex
- 7 but being tricked into it by caretakers or --
- 8 or talked into it, et cetera?
- 9 One may have personal views about
- 10 whether an adult can ever not be using
- 11 improper --
- 12 MR. KNEEDLER: But -- but the point
- is, in that -- in that encounter, the potential
- 14 for the use of force, the risk for the use of
- 15 force is always -- the same -- the same risk.
- 16 And -- and whether or not force is
- 17 used in 50 percent of the cases or 25 percent
- 18 of the cases --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it doesn't
- 20 surprise you --
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: -- in that context is
- 22 not the relevant --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It doesn't
- 24 surprise you that the courts below are split on
- 25 this question, just the way they were under

- 1 ACCA.
- 2 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, the -- as we
- 3 point out in our brief, the distinctions in the
- 4 lower courts on this question and on a number
- of them have to do with the particular elements
- 6 of the state offense.
- 7 What -- particularly when it comes to
- 8 sex offenses, it's difficult to -- to say
- 9 statutory rape or sexual abuse of a minor
- 10 because the elements of the state offense may
- 11 vary, but if --
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Kneedler, if I
- may take you in a slightly different direction,
- 14 some have criticized void-for-vagueness
- doctrine as a subspecies of substantive due
- 16 process, and they are legitimate on that score.
- 17 Others suggest that it really is an
- 18 element -- form of procedural due process and
- 19 also a product of our separation of powers, as
- we've discussed, to keep judges out of making
- 21 new law.
- What's -- what's the government's
- 23 position on that?
- 24 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, I don't know that
- we've addressed it in precisely those terms.

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JUSTICE GORSUCH: That's why I'm
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- 2 asking you now.
- 3 (Laughter.)
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: No, it -- it feels like
- 5 more of a -- it seems like more of a
- 6 substantive due process limitation, although it
- 7 does --
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Why? Because the
- 9 doctrine doesn't prohibit the Congress from
- 10 legislating it in any area. It just says you
- 11 have to do it in a way that provides fair
- 12 notice and that doesn't involve this body in
- 13 law making.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, in that sense, I
- 15 mean, I suppose it has a procedural aspect, but
- 16 I -- but I think that, when you think about
- 17 notice, but I think substantively, it also --
- 18 it also requires that Congress be --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Congress could do --
- 20 specify any crimes it wishes to include in this
- 21 statute tomorrow.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Yes.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: There's no
- 24 substantive limitation.
- 25 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, it -- it could,

- 1 but Congress chose to identify a category of
- 2 crimes that it believed gave rise to a
- 3 substantial risk, and we shouldn't expect the
- 4 impossible from Congress when it wants to
- 5 identify crimes by category.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Really? Even when
- 7 it's going to put people in prison and deprive
- 8 them of liberty and result in deportation, we
- 9 shouldn't expect Congress to be able to specify
- 10 those who are captured by its laws?
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: We -- we think this law
- reasonably captures the category that Congress
- 13 thought -- whose conduct gave rise to a serious
- 14 risk of -- of physical force being used. If I
- 15 could refer --
- 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Kneedler, did I
- get, correctly, your answer to the question
- 18 about a crime of moral turpitude being an
- 19 alternative that the government could have
- 20 pursued? You say the immigration judge found
- 21 that this was a crime.
- MR. KNEEDLER: But on grounds that we
- think were not correct because the immigration
- 24 judge did not apply the categorical approach,
- 25 which has since been determined to be the right

1 way to look at crime involving moral turpitude.

- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 3 Mr. Kneedler.
- 4 Mr. Rosenkranz?
- 5 OPENING ARGUMENT BY COUNSEL FOR RESPONDENT
- 6 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 7 justice, and may it please the Court.
- 8 Let me begin -- begin with Justice
- 9 Gorsuch's central point. Justice Gorsuch is
- 10 right. This is not a job that Congress can
- 11 appropriately delegate to the courts and to
- 12 enforcement officials on the ground.
- 13 Congress has written a statute that
- 14 makes it impossible for ordinary citizens or
- 15 for law enforcement or for immigration
- officials to figure out what the law is, and
- 17 Congress has delegated that function to them.
- 18 It has done it with two features that
- 19 this Court described as dooming the ACCA
- 20 residual clause.
- 21 First, the piece that most concerned
- the Court, the Court said was most important,
- 23 hypothesizing this ordinary case of a crime
- and, second, then estimating the risk
- associated with that hypothesized version and

- 1 whether that meets some vague standard.
- 2 The government warned the Court in
- 3 Johnson that section 16(b) was "equally
- 4 susceptible to challenge." The government was
- 5 right then, and the differences in statutory
- 6 language that the government has since
- 7 discovered do not change the outcome.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, since
- 9 discovered, but the statute here says "during
- 10 the course of committing the offense." And
- 11 that's quite different from the statute in
- 12 Johnson.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Your Honor, it isn't
- 14 quite different from the statute in Johnson.
- 15 The statute in Johnson has the same limitation
- in different language. Section 16(b) covers
- 17 risks in the course of committing the crime,
- 18 ACCA's residual clause covered "a crime that
- 19 otherwise involves conduct."
- 20 Both are referring back to the crime.
- 21 But I really -- I -- I would like to address
- 22 more concretely this "in the course of
- committing the crime" point because I can't
- tell you why the government is wrong without
- 25 knowing what the government thinks those words

- 1 mean.
- 2 And the government keeps shifting back
- 3 and forth between two versions of what in the
- 4 course of committing the crime means. At
- 5 points, the government says that it means in
- 6 order to satisfy the elements of the crime.
- 7 So it reads the sentence to mean you
- 8 look for substantial risk that physical force
- 9 may be used in order to satisfy the elements,
- 10 but that's not how any Court was ever applying
- 11 this provision. It is not how the government
- was telling the courts to apply this provision.
- The government back then and even now,
- 14 Mr. Kneedler points to conspiracy and other
- inchoate offenses, those offenses are
- 16 completed. The elements are completed when you
- 17 say, I want you to kill my wife, here is 100
- bucks, they are completed with the utterance of
- 19 those words.
- Nevertheless, you look after the
- 21 utterance, at least the government urged the
- 22 courts. And what about attempted burglary in
- James? As Johnson itself points out, or
- 24 burglary -- Johnson itself points out burglary
- was a problem. Why? Precisely because, under

- 1 the ordinary case approach, courts were
- 2 required to look past the elements. Burglary
- 3 is committed, the elements are completed the
- 4 moment you cross the threshold.
- 5 That's -- if that's the government's
- 6 reading, then burglary would be out. What the
- 7 court said in Johnson is that it is what
- 8 happens after you cross the threshold that
- 9 creates the risk.
- 10 But that's -- so -- so then the
- 11 government shifts to, okay, but no, no, it is
- 12 while the crime is under way, that's what "in
- the course of committing the crime" means, but
- 14 that's not a solution. That is exactly the
- 15 problem that Johnson describes.
- 16 Its concern was that the ordinary case
- 17 analysis was "detached from the statutory
- 18 elements." And that -- that it leads courts to
- 19 speculate about what happens after the
- 20 statutory elements have all been satisfied, but
- 21 while the crime is under way.
- That's just as imaginary. Now
- 23 let's -- let's look at --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Suppose, Mr.
- 25 Rosenkranz, suppose a state enacted a statute

- 1 that says that no person may be licensed to
- teach preschool, if the person has satisfied
- 3 the language, not by reference to 16(b), but
- 4 the language that is included in, in 16(b).
- 5 Would that be unconstitutionally
- 6 vague?
- 7 MR. ROSENKRANZ: No, I -- I don't
- 8 think it would be. If it is some state that is
- 9 not incorporating by reference Congress's
- 10 handiwork or saying, we're adopting this
- 11 language because this is language Congress
- 12 adopted, it wouldn't be, but -- and I see we're
- 13 shifting now to the other piece of the case
- 14 which is whether -- which is the application of
- 15 criminal standards --
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, before I
- 17 decide -- before I can determine whether this
- is unconstitutionally vague, I have to know
- 19 what the standard is, so that's my question.
- 20 If we apply the standard that -- that
- 21 generally applies to civil statutes, would this
- 22 be unconstitutionally vague?
- 23 MR. ROSENKRANZ: The standard that --
- JUSTICE ALITO: We might do -- we
- 25 might do a wonderful job of pruning the United

- 1 States Code if we said that every civil statute
- 2 that is not written with the specificity that
- 3 is required by criminal statute is
- 4 unconstitutionally vague, we could boil that
- 5 down a lot, but that's what I'm asking. Is
- 6 that what you are arguing?
- 7 MR. ROSENKRANZ: No, not at all, Your
- 8 Honor. First, you are talking about a civil
- 9 statute here that is very different from
- 10 deportation. It is --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: I am taking it
- 12 step-by-step.
- 13 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Right. It is a
- 14 licensing statute. So there are three things
- to say about how this criminal standard applies
- 16 in this civil context.
- 17 The first is to the premise of Your
- 18 Honor's question, Jordan settles the
- 19 question -- the answer to the question how you
- 20 apply criminal to the deportation context, but
- 21 this Court never has to decide whether to
- 22 reaffirm Jordan --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Let's -- let's say
- 24 we don't think Jordan decided that issue.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Yes, so two things to

- 1 say before you even address Jordan, and then
- 2 the third thing to say is that Jordan was
- 3 right.
- 4 So the first two things, apropos of
- 5 Justice Alito's embedded assumption, section
- 6 16(b) is a criminal statute that Congress
- 7 elected to import wholesale into this statute.
- 8 This Court has held that, if Congress
- 9 does that, it must -- then courts must apply
- 10 the same criminal vagueness standards to the
- 11 statute --
- 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, that's just a
- minor point that gets off the basic point of
- 14 Justice Alito, but it did not incorporate
- 15 exactly this statute. The language is
- 16 different. But we will leave that.
- 17 A question is pending.
- 18 MR. ROSENKRANZ: I'm sorry, Justice
- 19 Kennedy. Congress literally said, in the INA,
- 20 that the crime of the -- that the definition of
- 21 crime of violence is the definition of section
- 22 16(b), Section 16(b) being a criminal statute.
- 23 It then added all sorts of bells and
- 24 whistles of other ways to create an aggregated
- 25 felony, but this court, in A.B. Small, said,

- 1 Here is what you do when you have a statute
- 2 that has both criminal and civil
- 3 applications --
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I -- I took us
- 5 away from Justice Alito's inquiry. He -- he
- 6 wants to know the standard for determining
- 7 vagueness in civil cases.
- 8 MR. ROSENKRANZ: So the standard for
- 9 determining vagueness in civil cases was laid
- 10 out by this Court in Hoffman Estates, and the
- answer is it depends on how serious the crime
- 12 is.
- 13 The -- the seriousness of the crime --
- 14 excuse me, how serious the penalty is or how
- 15 serious the consequence is. And --
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Exactly. And that's
- where I get stuck, right, because the
- 18 consequences in many civil matters can be very
- 19 grave, more so even than a lot of criminal
- 20 penalties. Civil forfeiture, take a man's
- 21 home, his entire livelihood, deport him.
- 22 And I can think of lots of other
- 23 examples that can be graver than misdemeanor
- 24 offense on the books today. Again, the line
- 25 between civil and criminal depends upon a

- 1 7-part non-exclusive factor balancing test. So
- what am I supposed to do with that?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well, Your Honor, I
- 4 will answer the question, but let me preface.
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Great.
- 6 (Laughter).
- 7 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Let me just preface
- 8 it by saying I have only mentioned one of the
- 9 reasons this Court doesn't have to figure out
- 10 the answer to that question. And then --
- 11 JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right. But
- let's answer the question first and then go on.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Okay. So I would go
- 14 back to your point, Justice Gorsuch, that this
- 15 Court has repeatedly rejected a sharp line
- 16 between civil and criminal.
- 17 The correct distinction is the one
- 18 that this Court identified in Hoffman Estates,
- 19 cases, whether civil or criminal, with severe
- 20 consequences --
- 21 JUSTICE GORSUCH: How do I determine
- 22 that?
- 23 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Yes. So here is how
- 24 you determine it? One thing -- and by the way,
- 25 this Court has never had to answer that

1 question since Hoffman Estates set this out, so

- 2 it is not a question that arises very often.
- 3 The way the Court answers the question
- 4 here is -- is we know that criminal cases, and
- 5 First Amendment cases are on one side of the
- 6 line.
- 7 And what else comes on that side of
- 8 the line? If ever there was a consequence that
- 9 was on a par with criminal cases, it is
- 10 banishment, exile, lifetime banishment, the
- 11 Framers understood banishment to be equivalent
- 12 to taking away that which makes life worth
- living, Madison talked about banishment as the
- 14 quintessential penalty, he says it is difficult
- to imagine a doom to which the name cannot be
- 16 applied. By the way, this is not new to this
- 17 Court. It's not just Justice Ginsburg's
- 18 example.
- In a case involving a criminal
- 20 protection, that is a constitutional protection
- 21 that -- that relates only to crimes, that is
- 22 Padilla and the -- the Sixth Amendment,
- 23 deportation already stands alone as the only
- 24 civil consequence that triggers a
- 25 constitutional protection on a par with the

- 1 criminal protection.
- 2 So you don't get to come into court
- 3 and say my lawyer didn't get -- didn't tell me
- 4 that I could forfeit --
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I get that you
- 6 don't want to answer the question.
- 7 (Laughter.)
- 9 I'm very interested in the answer, which is
- 10 Justice Gorsuch is -- is asking how
- 11 you -- where do you draw the line? So
- 12 acceptable civil vagueness and non-acceptable
- 13 civil vagueness?
- 14 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well, Your Honor --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Or vagueness
- 16 generally.
- 17 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Hoffman Estates says
- 18 it varies. So what we're talking about is the
- 19 line between the severest penalties and those
- 20 penalties that are less severe.
- 21 The answer is, if it is on a par with
- 22 a criminal punishment such that someone would
- trade one for the other, this Court answered
- 24 that question in Lee.
- In Lee, this Court said, as Justice

- 1 Gorsuch said earlier today, most people would
- 2 happily take a little bit extra time in prison
- 3 in order to avoid the consequence of
- 4 deportation.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: My earlier question
- 6 was about licensing. So suppose this language
- 7 applies to license as an attorney, license as a
- 8 physician. Taking that away from a person is
- 9 pretty severe.
- 10 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Yes, Your Honor, but
- 11 -- but not as severe as lifetime banishment
- 12 from this country, which is preceded by
- 13 automatic and mandatory imprisonment.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: And when we start --
- aren't we going to get into this same kind of
- legislating and how -- how severe? Where is
- 17 this line drawn?
- 18 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well, Your Honor,
- 19 this is the line this Court drew in Hoffman
- 20 Estates. I mean, that was decades ago.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: What do you think
- about this line? Life, liberty, or property.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: That's a great line.
- 24 JUSTICE GORSUCH: It's right out of
- 25 the text of the Due Process Clause itself.

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1
               MR. ROSENKRANZ: Yes, that's a great
 2
      line: Life, liberty, or property. And
 3
     particularly here we're talking about a liberty
     interest, a liberty interest that says you must
 4
 5
      leave, for some people, the only home that you
     have ever -- that you've ever had. You must
 6
7
      leave your family.
8
               So that when someone is making the
9
     decision, am I going to plead guilty to a crime
10
     that I've never -- that I didn't commit in
11
     return for time served, he needs to know -- by
      the way, in return for crime served so he can
12
13
     get back to his wife and kids -- he needs to
14
     know whether ICE is going to be standing out
15
     there depriving him of that liberty and
16
     deporting him from his wife and kids?
17
               JUSTICE BREYER: You think you could
18
     go back to Justice Kennedy's original question?
      If you don't recall it, what sticks in my mind,
19
20
      if I get it right, is let's look at the old
     ACCA -- the one we struck down in Johnson, and
21
22
     the difficult language was it involves conduct
23
     that presents a serious potential risk of
24
     physical injury to another. And then there
25
     were a lot of examples where, gee, it's awfully
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- 1 tough to figure out whether it does or does not
- 2 fall within those words.
- Now let's look at this language. It
- 4 involves a substantial risk that physical force
- 5 against the person or property to another may
- 6 be used in the course of committing the
- 7 offense. Now, that would seem to be that if
- 8 the offense is conspiracy to commit burglary,
- 9 the conspiracy is finished, over, done with,
- 10 long before they get to the property.
- 11 And so that wouldn't be too tough.
- 12 But burglary, which takes place on the
- 13 property, or conspiracy under the first statute
- 14 which would lead to the burglary that takes
- 15 place, well, that becomes tougher. Okay.
- Now let's look at our statute now.
- 17 Give me some examples. I'm sure there are
- 18 many. But I think it would be helpful where
- 19 under this language, it seems, my God, what is
- 20 the basic case? This is impossible.
- 21 MR. ROSENKRANZ: I'll give you
- 22 several.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: First, Sykes,
- 25 vehicular flight. Okay. How do we -- the

- 1 Court was -- was mired in controversy about how
- 2 you figure out whether vehicular flight is
- 3 going to give rise to the right sort of risk
- 4 and how do you -- how did the Court do it? It
- 5 was looking at the moments or the long time
- 6 frame after the elements were satisfied. The
- 7 moment you pull out, you are in vehicular
- 8 flight.
- 9 So "in the course of" certainly
- 10 doesn't help. And the distinction between
- 11 physical force and physical injury doesn't
- 12 help. And the distinction between property and
- personal injury doesn't help. You're still
- 14 always imagining what is happening after you
- 15 pull out?
- Okay, next one, residential trespass.
- 17 It all depends upon, first, what do you imagine
- 18 the ordinary case to be of residential trespass
- 19 and then figure out how it plays out.
- Or car burglary, same exact problem.
- Or to take one example directly out of ACCA,
- 22 extortion.
- 23 It all depends upon the ordinary case
- 24 analysis, which -- which goes back to Justice
- 25 Sotomayor's question early on. The heart of

- 1 this problem is this ordinary case approach and
- 2 none of the -- the statutory differences that
- 3 the Government has pointed to help you figure
- 4 out what the ordinary case is.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: And, Mr. Rosenkranz,
- 6 just to tie in this ordinary case problem with
- 7 this phrase about -- "during the commission of
- 8 the crime," has the Government in all of this
- 9 briefing and in all of this argument ever come
- 10 up with a single crime in which the ordinary
- 11 case of that crime, the injury would be
- occurring after the commission of the crime?
- 13 If the commission of the crime is taken to mean
- 14 not just elements but a more general view of
- 15 what the crime is.
- 16 MR. ROSENKRANZ: In this case --
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm just suggesting
- 18 that the Government has never come up with a
- 19 single case under ACCA in which -- and,
- 20 remember, ACCA requires you to look at the
- 21 ordinary case.
- In the ordinary case, what crime has
- 23 injury that occurs after the commission of the
- 24 crime? The Government has not told us of any.
- 25 MR. ROSENKRANZ: If you are -- that is

- 1 correct, after the crime is over. I mean,
- 2 conspiracy or solicitation to murder, the crime
- 3 is done -- it occurs after. I think the
- 4 Government's current position, contrary to what
- 5 it persuaded multiple courts of appeals of, was
- 6 that that's out.
- 7 And so that's the example, but in
- 8 order to get there, the Government has to take
- 9 the quintessential crime of violence and say
- 10 that it is not --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: And that's
- inconsistent with everything that the
- Government has said in multiple cases; isn't
- 14 that correct?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Yes, in -- I mean,
- 16 the courts of appeals that have said that those
- 17 crimes are within the residual --
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: They're saying right
- 19 now, what about conspiracy? I mean, you can
- 20 have conspiracy to commit burglary. It's over,
- 21 once you conspire.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Right. Well, that's
- 23 a -- so that's an example, but I think the
- 24 Government said that's in.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: That that's in.

1 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Right. And so if

- 2 that's in, then this whole notion of in the
- 3 course of committing the crime doesn't do any
- 4 work.
- 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Could --
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: Similarly, the
- 7 Government -- please.
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's a different
- 9 point. Could -- could the government pass a
- 10 statute saying that aliens who commit criminal
- offenses are deportable if in the discretion of
- 12 the Attorney General, the presence of the alien
- is inconsistent with the best interests of the
- 14 people of the United States?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: That is the basis of
- 16 deportation? No.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Why?
- 18 MR. ROSENKRANZ: I'm sorry, let me --
- 19 let me back up.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Another -- what
- 21 standards must a statute meet before an
- 22 administrative officer can make the
- 23 determination that the -- that remaining in the
- 24 United States is not in the best interests of
- 25 the United States?

1	MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well
2	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Would that would
3	that suffice? Would that be unconstitutional?
4	MR. ROSENKRANZ: That would be
5	unconstitutional
6	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Under what rule and
7	under what context?
8	MR. ROSENKRANZ: Under the criminal
9	void-for-vagueness rule. A reasonable person,
10	whether it is the deportee or an official on
11	the ground or an administrative law judge would
12	have no idea what the content of that
13	prescription is, as a basis for being within
14	the universe of people who can who are
15	identified as being deportable.
16	Now, if it's a basis for the Attorney
17	General's exercise of discretion that despite
18	the fact that you are deportable as Congress
19	has defined it, I am not going to deport you,
20	that's another story. And by the way, that was
21	the Mahler case.
22	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Rosenkranz, what
23	do you say to the critique that the
24	void-for-vagueness doctrine is, as a racial
25	issue matter, is just substantive due process

- 1 and suspect on that basis and therefore should
- 2 be narrowly construed?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Your Honor, it's not
- 4 -- it's not substantive due process. It's a
- 5 procedural due process concern and it's a
- 6 separation of powers concern. It's both of
- 7 those.
- 8 It is the procedural right on the part
- 9 of the individual who is being accused or being
- 10 deported to know what the law is in advance.
- 11 And as Justice Thomas has explained very
- 12 eloquently, it derives out of the rule of
- 13 lenity. And it's also, as Your Honor is
- 14 pointing out, a very important separation of
- 15 powers set of principles because the law
- enforcement officer on the ground who gets to
- tell a non-LPR, you are an aggravated felon and
- 18 you are out, with no opportunity for BIA review
- 19 and very limited judicial -- opportunity for
- 20 judicial review, that is a classic abdication
- of congressional authority to line level
- 22 officers.
- 23 JUSTICE ALITO: How is it procedural?
- 24 I don't understand how you can say it is a
- 25 procedural right. You said -- you said the

- 1 statute is void for vagueness. That certainly
- 2 is substantive.
- 3 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Your Honor, you say
- 4 the statute is void for vagueness because when
- 5 it is being applied to an individual, that
- 6 individual is given no notice that lifetime
- 7 banishment is going to be the consequence of
- 8 what he thought to be a safe harbor --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: And what if he was
- 10 given notice in some other way?
- 11 MR. ROSENKRANZ: I think it depends in
- 12 what way. But this Court said in Johnson -- I
- mean, Johnson actually had notice. Johnson
- 14 knew that the illegal -- that the sawed-off
- shotgun was illegal, but this Court struck the
- 16 statute.
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: So that makes my
- 18 point. He had notice. He knew. So where's
- 19 the procedural violation?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well, for the vast
- 21 majority of people and the people affected by
- 22 it, it is procedural.
- But, you know, Your Honor, I just
- 24 realized, in this colloquy, I never did answer
- 25 the other part of Your Honor's question,

- 1 Justice Alito, about the reasons why the
- 2 vagueness standard applies here, the criminal
- 3 vagueness standard.
- 4 So the first I said, before you ever
- 5 get to Jordan, is that the -- is that 16(b) is
- 6 itself a criminal statute.
- 7 The second reason is, to the point
- 8 that Justice Gorsuch was making about the
- 9 relationship between -- between criminal law
- 10 and immigration law, there is not an area of
- law where the two are as integrated, and 16(b),
- in particular, excuse me, the ACCA provision
- 13 here, in particular, has very significant
- 14 criminal consequences.
- The aggregated felon label, once you
- 16 are an aggregated felon, and that's in the INA,
- 17 certain immigration crimes are triggered. And
- 18 so aggregated felon becomes a -- an element of
- 19 a crime.
- 20 And I will give you an example.
- 21 If -- if this -- if this vagueness analysis
- works the way the government says it works, Mr.
- 23 Dimaya can be deported because he had
- 24 sufficient notice or the statute was
- 25 sufficiently clear, but an aggravated felon who

- 1 reenters this country is prosecuted as an
- 2 aggregated felon.
- 3 So if he reentered the country, he can
- 4 then be not -- he then -- he can then not be
- 5 prosecuted as an aggregated felon because the
- 6 statute would be too vague. That makes no
- 7 sense, which is exactly why this Court adopted
- 8 the rule that it adopted in A.B. Small and that
- 9 four members of this Court repeated in
- 10 Northwestern Bell, which is, if Congress makes
- 11 that choice to give civil and criminal
- ramifications to the same statute, the very
- same statute, if the statute is void for vague
- in one context, it is void for vague in the
- other.
- 16 And, by the way, that other context in
- 17 A.B. Small was a silly little contract case,
- not, you know, even, you know, the licensing of
- 19 a nursery.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Rosenkranz, can
- 21 I ask you a simple question? If -- if, as this
- 22 Court, has held crime of moral turpitude isn't
- 23 unconstitutionally vague, why should 16(b) fail
- 24 to meet the vaqueness test?
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Your Honor, the

- 1 answer is crime involving moral turpitude does
- 2 not sit in a vacuum by itself. It is a phrase
- 3 that Congress adopted that has, at this point,
- 4 probably two centuries' worth of law describing
- 5 what is in and what is out.
- 6 And, by the way, what did the Court do
- 7 in Jordan? What the Court did in Jordan was to
- 8 say, You, Jordan, you committed a fraud. One
- 9 thing that has been clear, since as long as
- 10 those words have been used, is that a fraud is
- 11 a classic crime involving moral turpitude.
- 12 That's why he lost that case. And if
- 13 he had been criminally prosecuted under a
- 14 statute that made an element of the crime that
- it become -- that it be a crime involving moral
- 16 turpitude, the same result would obtain.
- 17 And -- and so --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, maybe you have
- 19 in your head a list of -- you could categorize
- 20 any offense that I might mention and say that's
- 21 a crime of moral turpitude, that's not a crime
- of moral turpitude. I couldn't do that.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well --
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: And I doubt that
- 25 somebody who is facing possible removal

- 1 consequences would be able to answer that
- 2 question.
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: Well, Your Honor --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: Okay. Shooting a bald
- 5 eagle, is that -- is that a crime of moral
- 6 turpitude? Some people would think so.
- 7 MR. ROSENKRANZ: It is -- it is not.
- 8 JUSTICE ALITO: It is not. So how
- 9 about --
- MR. ROSENKRANZ: And, by the way, nor
- 11 is flag burning.
- 12 But let me -- but let me answer the
- 13 question this way.
- 14 You don't have to know, but you -- you
- 15 have to be able to go to someplace like a
- lawyer who can tell you what the answer is.
- 17 And where does a lawyer go? There are 14 pages
- of -- of Kurzban, where every single possible
- 19 crime is categorized as in or out based upon
- 20 decades of -- of judicial and other
- interpretations. That's how one knows.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: And -- and in a crime
- of moral turpitude, we don't have to consider
- 24 what the ordinary case is, do we?
- 25 MR. ROSENKRANZ: I think that is what

1 the Court -- not the ordinary case, that is for

- 2 sure.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: We don't.
- 4 MR. ROSENKRANZ: That is correct.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: All we do is look to
- 6 the elements everybody has to meet.
- 7 MR. ROSENKRANZ: Correct, correct. So
- 8 let me close with this. I appreciate the
- 9 instinct to try and see if this Court can do
- 10 better with Section 16(b) than it did with
- 11 ACCA's residual clause, but in deciding whether
- 12 to take that route, this Court has to decide
- whether anything is to be gained by this whole
- 14 enterprise of sending the lower courts back to
- apply now a different standard and figure out
- 16 how it applies to all of these claims, that
- 17 process is going to be no less arbitrary, no
- 18 less speculative, and lifetime banishment
- 19 should not hang on the unpredictable answer to
- the question, Is this crime in or is it out?
- 21 Congress can, of course, decide the
- 22 circumstances under which lifetime residents
- 23 can be kicked out of this country, but it
- 24 disserves the separation of powers, that
- 25 Justice Gorsuch referred to, to allow Congress

- 1 to pass the buck to immigration officials and
- 2 courts with a provision this vague.
- If there are no further questions, we
- 4 respectfully request that the Court affirm the
- 5 Court of Appeals.
- 6 Thank you, Your Honor.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 8 Counsel.
- 9 Mr. Kneedler, three minutes.
- 10 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, there are several
- 12 points I would like to make. First of all,
- with respect to conspiracy and some of the
- other crimes that have been mentioned, this is
- 15 a critical point to understand.
- 16 Those crimes are continuing crimes.
- 17 Conspiracy is -- conspiracy, you could be
- 18 prosecuted for conspiracy from the moment of
- 19 the agreement, but the conspiracy continues up
- 20 until the commission of the crime. The
- 21 commission of the crime is the culmination of
- the conspiracy.
- The same thing with burglary, burglary
- is not over when you enter the house. It -- it
- is over when you leave the house.

1	Kidnapping is not over until the
2	victim is freed. Escape from a prison is a
3	continuing offense.
4	And 16(b) and its counterpart in
5	924(c) serve a critical role in circumstances
6	like that, where a crime extends over a period
7	of time, you can complete the crime without
8	violence being an element, but there is it
9	is instinct with risk of crime, and that is
10	why excuse me, force, and that is why
11	Congress addressed it, and that is what this
12	Court unanimously focused upon in Leocal.
13	This 16(b) has been on the books
14	for 30 years and has not generated any
15	anything like the sort of confusion that ACCA's
16	residual clause did. And this Court, we
17	submit, should pause greatly before extracting
18	from the U.S. Code a statute that has so many
19	applications.
20	In the immigration context, this
21	statute is applied all the time through the
22	mediation of an administrative body. It is not
23	like a regular civil law in that respect.
24	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In how many of
25	those cases is it the sole basis of

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1 deportation?
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- 2 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, it can be -- I
- don't know the percentage, but it also a basis
- 4 of -- of denial for discretionary relief.
- 5 Also in deciding what falls in this
- 6 category, statistics are not the -- the major
- 7 thing. There are plenty of things to look at,
- 8 the body of judicial decisions construing the
- 9 very provision, the background of the legal
- 10 traditional, which is what this Court drew on
- in -- in Leocal, in saying that burglary is a
- 12 classic example, it is a classic example for
- 13 the reasons that I just gave.
- 14 You can look at the legislative
- 15 judgments embodied in the crime, is the -- is
- the circumstance when force is not used, does
- 17 it -- is it like the situations where the
- 18 elements are -- are present?
- 19 You asked for an example, I think, of
- 20 a crime that would be in under ACCA and out
- 21 here. Possession of a weapon is one because
- 22 possession -- inherent in the possession is not
- the use. There has to be a subsequent act in
- 24 the use of a weapon.
- 25 So that's -- that's out here because

- 1 it is not in the course of committing the crime
- of possession. We said it was in, in ACCA,
- 3 because it is -- injury might flow, and it was
- 4 actually a pretty good illustration of the
- 5 difference between the two circumstances.
- 6 And, finally, with respect to
- 7 immigration, I think it is important for the
- 8 Court to understand that immigration provisions
- 9 and grounds for deportation are often written
- in very broad and general terms and given
- 11 content by the executive branch in which
- 12 Congress has -- has vested authority.
- 13 Crimes involving moral turpitude --
- 14 JUSTICE GORSUCH: You are not asking
- 15 for the executive -- for the executive to
- 16 define these crimes. You are asking for us to
- 17 do it, right?
- 18 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, in the
- 19 immigration context --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: This isn't an
- 21 example where Congress has delegated authority
- 22 to the executive to do this.
- 23 Are you asking -- are you suggesting
- it is delegated to this branch to do it?
- 25 MR. KNEEDLER: No, it is not delegated

1	to this branch. This branch has to construe
2	the the statute that Congress has enacted.
3	In other circumstances, the agency, of course
4	gets deference in deciding what constitutes a
5	particular removable offense.
6	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
7	Counsel.
8	The case is submitted.
9	(Whereupon, 12:08 p.m. the case was
LO	submitted.)
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